

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-10 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been currently amended to more clearly point out the feature of the invention of the present application, and claim 2 has been canceled. Support for amendments to claim 1 may be found at, for example, page 6, lines 5-7 of the specification. No new matter has been introduced. Entry of the amendments and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bell (U.S. Patent No. 5,125,415) in view of Riely et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,631,654).

Currently presented claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a liquid absorption member disposed at or near the inlet port in the passage to surround the passage,” and “a gas permeable and liquid impermeable filter for blocking the passage at a position farther than the liquid absorption member from the inlet port.” Due to these features, a cap for a tube in which a liquid medicine flows according to the claimed invention has a technical advantage to effectively absorb a leading portion of the liquid flowing into the passage.

Bell discloses a syringe tip cap with self-sealing filter and a method for purging air from a syringe-like container containing air and hazardous liquid. Riely et al. discloses a gas purge device having a filter medium.

As the Examiner admits in the Office Action, Bell fails to disclose a liquid absorption member described in claim 1. Regarding this, the Examiner asserts in the Office Action that Riely et al. teaches a cylindrical liquid absorption member 34 suited to be placed in a passage (page 3 of the Office Action).

However, Riely et al. only discloses a cylindrical hydrophobic segment 35, and a hemispherical and thimble-shaped filter material 34 (col. 7, lines 28-37 and Fig. 3 of Riely et al.), but does not teach a liquid absorption member as recited in claim 1. In other words, the thimble-shaped filter material 34 of Riely et al. is not configured to surround the passage. Furthermore, Riely et al. does not teach or suggest that the liquid absorption member is disposed at or near the inlet port in the passage, and that a gas permeable filter is located farther than the liquid absorption member from the inlet port, as described in claim 1.

As discussed above, neither Bell nor Riely et al. teaches or suggests the features described in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that it would not have been obvious for a person of ordinary skill in the art to reach the invention described in claim 1 even by combining Bell and Riely et al.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3-8 are also patentable over Bell in view of Riely et al. at least because of their dependency from independent claim 1.

For similar reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9 and 10, which are directed to a liquid medicine supplying apparatus for supplying a liquid medicine, are also patentable over Bell in view of Riely et al.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR §1.114(c)  
Application No. 10/523,993

Docket No. Q86186

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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